



Using Social Media for Family History

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Social media is a wonderful resource for family history. It can be used to connect with family, friends, colleagues, and group or societies members. Social media can be used to share text, photos, videos and other media. Queries posted on social media websites may be answered by individuals living in a local town, researching the same surnames, or by someone who may have resources available to help you.

In this class you will learn about Social Media and its uses for family history. You will also learn the value of hashtags: why to use them and how to search for them. There also are many Social Media communities to post questions and queries to request help in family history research.

Definition of Social Media

Social media consists of communication tools used online to connect people by sharing information through technology, social interaction, and collaboration using text, pictures, links, videos or other media.

Why Use Social Media?

- To connect with family and friends
- Get research help by posting research queries
- Locate cousins or distant relatives
- Learn new skills online through e-learning and wikis
- Research collaboration
- Share text, photos, and videos with family and friends

Types of Social Media

All of the social media tools that are in use today can be placed into one or more of the following categories:

- Blogging/Microblogging
- Content Creation/Curation
- Messaging
- Photo Sharing
- Social Networking
- Video sharing and Live Streaming
- Wiki's and E-Learning

Social Media Tools: Hashtags

Hashtags are keyword phrases or labels that are given to any topic you choose to post about.

These are similar to tags you put at the end of a blog article. When you use a hashtag, you put a # (mark) before the topic you are writing about to give it a label. Hashtags are searchable and can be used to find posts or images with the same hashtag. When hashtags are used frequently, the topic is "trending." One example of a hashtag is #Genealogy. If you are attending a genealogy conference such as RootsTech attendees will use #RootsTech and the conference year to describe what is happening at the conference. You could also use the surnames you are writing about as a hashtag. Social media websites can be searched by hashtags to find information about a subject or topic. Public conversations from different users will be placed into a single stream. Please use hashtags thoughtfully and sparingly, no more than 3 to 4.

- Keyword phrases used with a # (mark)
- Used to label or categorize topics you use in posts, blogs, and Tweets.
- Search for a hashtag and see what people are saying about a topic.
- A trending item is a topic that is being used frequently on social media websites.

Social Media Tools: Blogs

Blogs are typically longer than most posts/Tweets and can be posts about any topic such as family history, grandchildren, hobbies or any subject that is of interest to someone. Photographs, document images, website links, videos, and sound can be added to a blog. Photos can be added from photo sharing websites like Flickr. Posts are added to a blog in chronological order with the newest post at the top. Older posts can be accessed by links on the right side. Hashtags (tags) can be added to the end of a blog with commas between words.

Many blogs are available on family history/genealogy topics.

- FamilySearch.org/blog
- Cyndislist.com/blogs
- GeneaBloggersTribe.com (Search blogs)
- Create Your Own Family History Blog
 - Blogger.com
 - [Weebly](http://Weebly.com)
 - [WordPress](http://WordPress.com)
- Why create a Family History Blog?
 - Easy to create and maintain
 - Write daily, weekly, monthly
 - Share with family members to get them excited about their ancestors
 - Cousins or distant relatives can find your blog using a Google search
 - Someone may have information to share which could help with a brick wall research problem

Microblogs

A microblog is a blog with less content. Microblogs can include text, links, photographs, video, or other media. Hashtags can added to the end of each post. Twitter and Tumblr are two places for microblogging.

Social Media Networking Tools

Social Networking is a fun way to connect with people you know or to find people you want to know. Photographs and posts can be shared with family members, friends, the public, or group members. Sharing photos and stories about your ancestors with family members can get them involved in doing family history. Groups can be created to share family stories, photographs, or videos and can be private or public. You can “like” or “follow” groups and societies to see posts about genealogy topics, sources for finding your ancestors, or finding out about new collections. You can also post queries to various groups to get assistance with your research. This is called crowdsourcing.

Social networking tools that are available:

- FamilySearch Communities
- Facebook
- Hangouts
- Google+
- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- Tumblr

Social Media Tools: FamilySearch Communities

Some of the FamilySearch Communities currently available

- British Isles
- Family History Research
- Germany
- Nordic
- U.S. and Canada Genealogy Research
- Welsh Family History
- Create your own community free

Social Media Tools: Facebook

Creating a Facebook Post

- Write text up to 63,206 characters, video up to 120 minutes
- Add photos, website links, hashtags, and emojis
- Share posts from other people
- Check in to a conference or place
- Create a poll to ask questions of followers
- Host a Facebook Live event

Finding Facebook Groups

Search at the top of the page for groups to follow like genealogical or historical societies, libraries, archives, bloggers, etc. Some popular Facebook pages:

- Family History Library, FamilySearch, American Ancestors, Ancestry, findmypast, Geneanet, MyHeritage, DNA Detectives, Search Squad
- Allen County Public Library or Illinois Historical Society, etc.
- Click like, follow, message, or join on the page to receive notifications, post queries, etc.

Facebook Group Queries

- Ask a specific question that includes
- Names and dates of individuals, names of family members if applicable

- Location of event/s
- What you have already found
- Theories you may have as to what may have occurred
- Put solved in your original post when query is answered

FamilySearch Facebook Communities

- British Isles Genealogy Research
- Canada Genealogy Research
- Europe Genealogy Research
 - Eastern Europe
 - Northern Europe
 - Southern Europe
- United States Research
 - Midwest Genealogy
 - Northeast Genealogy
 - South Genealogy
 - West Genealogy

Create a Facebook Group

- Create a group
- Select closed, public or private
- Customize the URL (optional)
- Set rules
- Invite people
- Begin posting
- Monitor posts

Types of Facebook Groups

- Public: Anyone on Facebook can see the group's posts.
- Closed: Only group members can see posts, but the group will show up when Facebook members search for it.
- Private: The group doesn't show up in Facebook search results, and only those who are invited can join

Connect with Cousins

- Search for names using the search bar
- Add localities to narrow down matches
- If you can't find them, find other cousins and look through their friends list
- Send them a message letting them know who you are
- Then request friendship or follow posts

Create a Facebook Event

- Use the Events link on the left sidebar
 - Click on Create Event
- Invite family members
- Use the Event page to make assignments
- Use Facebook Messenger with text or video to meet with event planners
- Attend!

Social Media Tools: Twitter

Get started by creating Tweets

- Create a short post called a Tweet
- Tweets can contain up to 280 characters
- Add photos and video
- Website links
- Hashtags

Twitter Posts

- Twitter is a great customer service tool
- Create a Tweet with @FamilySearch (Twitter name)
- Tweet to businesses, libraries, genealogical societies, etc.
- Add hashtags
- See what's trending by searching for Hashtags
- Add your Tweet to the trend

TweetDeck for Twitter

- Create lists in Twitter
- Track your lists in TweetDeck
- Use TweetDeck to track hashtags

Finding Twitter Groups to Follow

Search at the top of the page for family history, genealogy, libraries, archives, societies, bloggers, etc.

- FamilySearch.org/blog/en/social-media/
- Cyndislist.com
 - Social Networking for Genealogy
 - Twitter
- Ancestry Hour
- GenChat

Google+ is another social networking tool and can be used to “hangout” with people. There are some great family history/genealogy Hangouts like DearMYRTLE. Under “Events,” choose “Plan A Hangout” to invite people. Video hangouts can also be scheduled.

LinkedIn is a popular social media tool in the business world. Individuals can connect with people in their own industries and post to groups about various subjects.

Content Creation/Curation Websites

Tools like Pinterest have boards where you pin content. The content for a board can be for any topic: recipes, gardening, family history, whatever subject is of interest. The content can be created by the owner of the board or curated by finding content from other boards. Followers will be able to see information on a topic in one place. Paper.Li is another content curation tool used to find and collect content that can be shared on social media.

Social Media Tools: Pinterest

A few of the FamilySearch Pinterest Boards where you can find family history content

- Family History How To
- Family Time Activities
- Heritage Boards
 - British Isles
 - Canada
 - Germany
 - Scandinavia
- Tell Your Story
- Tips and Tricks: FamilySearch

Finding Pinterest Boards

- FamilySearch.org/blog/en/social-media/
- Cyndislist.com
 - Social Networking for Genealogy
 - Pinterest

Creating a Pinterest Board

- Create an account at Pinterest.com
- Search for Pinterest Boards at the top
- To create a Board:
 - Click on your name at the top right
 - See Boards you've created
 - Click on Create Board
 - Boards can be secret, public or shared with family and friends
 - Add content!

Use FamilySearch's Family Tree to add photos and stories to a family Pinterest Board

Social Media Tools: Wikis and Online Learning

A Wiki is a website that allows collaborative editing of the contents by users. FamilySearch Wiki is an encyclopedia of how to do genealogical research. It contains country pages, United States state pages, and province pages. There are links to online records for each US state and links to parish registers for localities in England. FamilySearch Wiki has pages that include research tools, localities, repositories, migration routes, methodology, language helps, Native American records, naturalization records, calendars, and handwriting. If you know about resources that are available in a locality, you can add information to a page or create a new one.

E-Learning is electronic learning that includes online classes. Live online classes called webinars are available on many topics that can be watched live or after the webinar is archived. Some are

available for free and others are available for a fee. FamilySearch has classes available that can be watched any time for free. There are classes for beginners, classes on doing research in various countries, and on subjects such as DNA, census, and military records. These can be found at FamilySearch.org by choosing “Get Help” at the top right, then “Help Center.” This takes you to a page where you can choose Genealogy Assistance. Choose “Lessons” underneath “What do you want to learn about?”

FamilySearch Research Wiki

- State and country pages
- Online records page for each state

Online Learning Help Center

- Help Center
 - Lessons
- Geneabloggers Webinar Calendar
- Ancestry Academy

Forums/Message Boards

Forums/Message Boards have been around for a very long time. Forums and message boards are websites where you can post queries by topic, surname, or locality. When you post a message, you may get an answer right away, or it may take weeks or months to get a response. You can also search forums and message boards for localities or surnames to see who else is doing research on your surname or in your locality and connect with them to share information.

Photo and Video Sharing

Some social media tools to share photos are 500 Pixels, Amazon Prime Photos, Apple's iCloud, Canon Irista, Dropbox, Facebook, Flickr, and Google Photos. You can share text, photos and video on Microblogging websites like Instagram, Tumblr, and Snapchat. Hashtags can also be added at the end of each post. Some video sharing tools are YouTube, Periscope (Twitter), and Vimeo.

Messaging Tools

Some tools for messaging individuals on a desktop computer or smartphone: Facebook Messenger, Google Hangouts, GroupMe, Skype, Snapchat, Viber, WeChat and WhatsApp. Some of these apps may include video chat capability.

Social Media Tools: Online Safety

Stay safe online by using the following tips:

- Make passwords long and strong
 - Include uppercase and lowercase letters and special characters
- Use unique passwords for each account.
- Report Facebook friend requests if you've already friended someone.
- Block or report inappropriate information.
- Disable geotagging on your cell phone for posting photos online.

Social Media Tools Links

Blogs

	Site Description	URL Address
FamilySearch Blog	Blogs written by FamilySearch and guests	https://familysearch.org/blog/en/
How to Choose the Best Blogging Platform in 2018	Beginner's Guide for WordPress	http://www.wpbeginner.com/beginners-guide/how-to-choose-the-best-blogging-platform/
Creating and finding Blog articles	Helpful links for creating a blog or finding a blog	https://lisalouisecooke.com/start-family-history-blog/ https://www.familytreemagazine.com/premium/40-social-media-mavericks/ http://geneabloggerstribes.com/search-blogs/ https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/character-count-guide http://www.theblogbuilders.com/how-to-start-a-blog/?gclid=Cj0KCQiAyszSBRDJARIsAHAqQ4rGUi_eOLtQtpkuq0111US_weWhyKa3TWIpy0872Xzp5xZyercWFYAg8mEALw_wcB https://en.support.wordpress.com/posts/tags/
Blogger	Free web publishing tool from Google	www.blogger.com/ https://www.shoutmeloud.com/how-to-start-a-free-blog-using-blogspot-com.html
Tumblr	Blogs written by many different Individuals and organizations, etc.	www.tumblr.com
Weebly	Free Weebly blog and website publishing	www.weebly.com
WordPress	Free WordPress blog and website publishing	www.wordpress.com https://en.support.wordpress.com/posts/tags/
Dear Myrtle	Genealogy writer since 1995	www.blog.dearmyrtle.com
Dick Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter	Genealogy Blog	https://blog.eogn.com/

Cyndi's List	Catalog of genealogical resources online containing blog information.	http://www.cyndislist.com/blogs/
Geneabloggers Tribe	Online genealogy blogging community	http://geneabloggertribe.com/search-blogs/ Search blogs
Genealogical Societies	List of genealogical society blogs by Genealogy Bank	https://blog.genealogybank.com/genealogical-society-blogs
	Genealogy Blog	https://blog.eogn.com/

Social Media

	Site Description	URL Address
Social Media Platforms	A description of social media platforms.	http://sbtvirtual.ca/10-types-social-media-platform-updated-2017/
Cyndi's List	Catalog of genealogical resources online for social media.	http://www.cyndislist.com/social-networking/
Facebook	<p>Social media website used to connect with family, friends, groups and societies.</p> <p>FamilySearch Research Wiki Genealogy Help on Facebook with Communities</p> <p>FamilySearch.org Blog post with Social Media links</p> <p>FamilySearch Facebook page</p> <p>Family History Library Facebook page</p> <p>Facebook Social Media for Genealogy</p> <p>Social Media for Genealogy on Facebook list</p> <p>Other groups to search for:</p> <p>FamilySearch Webinar Followers</p>	<p>www.facebook.com</p> <p>https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Genealogy_Help_on_Facebook</p> <p>https://familysearch.org/blog/en/social-media/</p> <p>https://www.facebook.com/familysearch/</p> <p>https://www.facebook.com/familyhistorylibrary/</p> <p>https://www.facebook.com/groups/socialmediagen/</p> <p>https://socialmediagenealogy.com/genealogy-on-facebook-list/</p> <p>https://www.facebook.com/groups/1805859502989278/</p>

	<p>Adoption/DNA: DNA Detectives, Search Squad, DD Social</p> <p>RAOGK</p> <p>Social Media for Genealogy</p> <p>Examples of other groups or societies: Georgia Genealogy Research, Library of Virginia, New England Historic Genealogical Society, Allen County Public Library, Oklahoma Historical Society, Ancestry.com, findmypast.com, Geneanet.org, Heritagequest.com</p>	
Facebook Groups	<p>Various pages where help is available for managing a group.</p>	<p>Customizing your group page https://www.facebook.com/help/206871819351594</p> <p>How To Create a Group https://www.facebook.com/help/167970719931213</p> <p>How to Create a Page https://www.facebook.com/help/104002523024878</p> <p>Administering a Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/groupadmins/tips.pdf/</p> <p>Tips for managing a Facebook page https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/5-tips-running-facebook-group-successfully-jason</p>
Google+	<p>Circles to connect with family, friends, colleagues, groups, and societies. Some examples are Dick Eastman (genealogy newsletter), Thomas MacEntee (Geneabloggers), Dear Myrtle Hangouts and Wacky Wednesdays</p>	<p>http://www.google.com/+learnmore/getstarted/guide.html</p> <p>http://googleplusforgenealogy.blogspot.com/</p>
Twitter	<p>Social networking and microblogging website using short messages called tweets.</p>	<p>www.twitter.com</p> <p>www.tweetdeck.com</p> <p>https://familysearch.org/blog/en/social-media/</p>

	Ancestry Hour GenChat	http://www.cyndislist.com/social-networking/twitter/
FamilySearch Family Tree	It is more than just a pedigree. Add sources, documents, photographs, stories and sounds. Share items in your Memory Gallery on Social Media websites	www.familysearch.org
Pinterest	Content creation and curation tool for sharing boards and pins on various topics such as family history.	www.pinterest.com https://familysearch.org/blog/en/social-media/ http://www.cyndislist.com/social-networking/pinterest/
Instagram	Online photo and video sharing social networking tool	www.instagram.com https://familysearch.org/blog/en/social-media/
Tumblr	Microblogging social networking website allowing sharing of media and other content.	www.tumblr.com

Wikis

	Site Description	URL Address
FamilySearch	FamilySearch Wiki contains genealogical related pages for countries, states and provinces, counties, and topics including methodology, repositories, migration routes, calendars, language helps, and handwriting.	https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/FamilySearch_Wiki:Introduction
Cyndi's List	Wikis for genealogy	http://www.cyndislist.com/wikis/
Ancestry.com	Family History Wiki	http://www.ancestry.com/wiki/index.php?title=Main_Page

Online Learning

	Site Description	URL Address
FamilySearch	FamilySearch learning center contains links to genealogy courses for beginners, research in various localities, and research on many subjects	https://familysearch.org/ask/landing?show=lessons&category=Genealogy%20Assistance
Cyndi's List	Educational links to various online courses and webinars related to genealogy	http://www.cyndislist.com/education/online-courses-and-webinars/
GeneaWebinars	News about upcoming hangouts, meetings and webinars offered throughout the online genealogy community. Add the Geneawebinars calendar to your Google Calendar.	http://blog.geneawebinars.com/
Legacy Family Tree	Genealogy Education	http://www.familytreewebinars.com/

Forums/Message Boards

	Site Description	URL Address
Genforum	Message boards by surname, localities, and subjects	www.genforum.com
Rootsweb	Message boards by surname, localities, and subjects	http://boards.rootsweb.com/?o_iid=33216&o_lid=33216&o_sch=Web+Property
Cyndi's List	Queries and message boards	http://www.cyndislist.com/queries/general/
Ancestry	Messages boards similar to Rootsweb and the Ancestry Support Community	http://boards.ancestry.com/ http://ancestryforums.custhelp.com/pages/home